



EXECUTIVE ORDER 07-48

**ORDER REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**1. PURPOSE:**

To address the importance of reducing climate change effects, to redirect County resources to minimize the impact of County government on the environment, and to organize the County government to begin adaptation to the effects of global warming.

**2. GOAL**

This Executive Order establishes an initial goal of reducing community greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 to twenty percent below year 2000 levels,

**3. DISCUSSION:**

Protection of the natural environment is fundamental to achieving and preserving the quality of life for Snohomish County residents.<sup>1</sup>

Our climate is changing and becoming warmer. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established by World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme found in its fourth assessment that greenhouse gas emissions have grown since pre-industrial times, with an increase of 70% between 1970 and 2004. The Panel said,<sup>2</sup>

The understanding of anthropogenic warming and cooling influences on climate has improved . . . leading to very high confidence [i.e., 9 out of 10 chance] that the globally averaged **net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming . . . \* \* \* Warming of the climate system is unequivocal . . .**  
[Emphasis added.]

Mitigating and adapting to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, if done correctly, will: save taxpayer dollars; help build the local economy and create jobs; improve air quality, public health, and community livability; and enhance our food and energy security.<sup>3</sup>

Considerable reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions related to energy use in buildings can be achieved by changes in building occupant behavior, cultural patterns, and technology.<sup>4</sup> More energy efficient buildings will not only reduce carbon emissions considerably, but will provide

<sup>1</sup> Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan, Natural Environment, NE-1 (February 1, 2006)

<sup>2</sup> IPCC Working Group I, "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis," p. 5 (Feb. 5 2007) ([http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM2feb07\\_new.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM2feb07_new.pdf)).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Summary for Policymakers IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Summary for Policymakers IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, p. 16.

health benefits by improving indoor and outdoor air quality and improve energy security by decreasing demand for energy.<sup>5</sup>

Increased use of transport demand management, using urban planning to reduce travel demand and providing information to reduce single occupant vehicle trips will also mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>6</sup>

Taking action now to respond to global warming and climate change is consistent with Snohomish County's Comprehensive Plan. Snohomish County should adopt policies and practices that are sustainable and minimize our impact on the environment and climate. Pursuant to Comprehensive Plan General Policy Goal NE1, the County will, "Continue, existing and develop new county plans and programs to protect and enhance the natural environment through a coordinated policy framework to maintain and improve the quality of life for Snohomish County."<sup>7</sup> Snohomish County will protect the natural environment by, among other things, promotion of "energy conservation and recycling to reduce detrimental effects on the natural environmental and human health and safety."<sup>8</sup>

Protecting the environment does not mean sacrificing economic well-being. We safeguard our quality of life by encouraging economic development that provides family wage jobs consistent with environmental and economic sustainability. Our goal is to, "encourage and accommodate economic growth through plans and programs in a manner that minimizes impacts to the natural environment," as provided by Natural Environment Policy NE-1.A.5.<sup>9</sup>

As Executive and simultaneously with this Executive Order, I am forming a Green Ribbon Climate Task Force to develop an action plan for mitigation of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. Community members and leaders who are members of this Task Force will propose feasible actionable items for reduction by 2020 of community-wide green house gas emissions to twenty percent below year 2000 levels and adaptation to climate change by the time it concludes its work by December 31, 2008.

#### **4. ACTIONS:**

4.1 Snohomish County has joined the International Coalition of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) and will be an active member and participant in the Climate Protection campaign.

4.2. Snohomish County hereby endorses the principles of the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration.

4.3 I hereby constitute and form a County Staff Climate Change Committee, whose members I will appoint.

4.3. With regard to the County's carbon footprint and emission of greenhouse gases, the Staff Committee will:

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<sup>5</sup> Summary for Policymakers IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Summary for Policymakers IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan, Natural Environment, Goal NE-1, page NE-2 (February 1, 2006)

<sup>8</sup> Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan, Natural Environment, Goal NE-9, page NE-16 (February 1, 2006)

<sup>9</sup> Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan, Natural Environment, Policy NE-1.A.5, page NE-2 (February 1, 2006)

- a. Recommend to the County Executive for his approval and adoption of an inventory and baseline of greenhouse gas emissions for Snohomish County as of the year 2000;
  - b. Recommend to the County Executive for his approval and adoption an action plan;
  - c. Implement emission reduction measures, policies, and practices as directed by the County Executive;
  - d. Monitor and verify results; and
  - e. Recommend changes to the plan to the County Executive based on results.
- 4.3.2 The Staff Committee will serve as a focus for and distribution of ideas and allow departments to use existing skills and talent on County staff more efficiently.
- 4.3.3 The Staff Committee will also consider, among other things:
- a. Compliance with part 2, chapter 348, Laws of 2007, regarding public sector fuel use;
  - b. Use of alternative fuels, biodiesel, hybrid vehicles, and plug in hybrid electric vehicles;
  - c. Energy use by the County, including natural gas and electricity;
  - d. More efficient use of the solid waste stream, including recycling;
  - e. Adoption of green building design and construction standards for County facilities;
  - f. County use of water resources;
  - g. Increasing the use of public transportation through transportation and land use strategies;
  - h. Consider the full range of policies and strategies for the County to adopt or undertake to ensure the emission reductions and economic goals are achieved;
  - i. Determine specific steps the County should take to prepare for the impact of global warming, including impacts to public health, agriculture, the coast line, forestry, and infrastructure of the County;
  - j. Assess what further steps the County should take to prepare for the impact of global warming; and
  - k. Work with municipalities in the County, tribal governments and with regional governments to maximize coordination and effectiveness of climate initiatives.

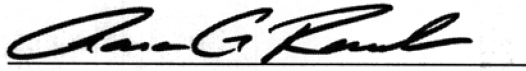
4.4 In consultation with the Facilities Management Department, County departments shall consider, and implement where practicable, green building design and construction practices for County facilities pending adoption of standards.

4.5 Executive branch departments and offices whose chief officers are appointed by the County Executive are directed to provide their full assistance and support to this initiative.

**CANCELLATION:**

This Executive Order will remain in effect until canceled or superseded.

Dated this 20th day of July, 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron G. Reardon", is written over a horizontal line.

Aaron G. Reardon  
County Executive